

Message Text

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TAGS: OGEN

SUBJECT: EXCERPT FROM FROST/ NIXON TELEVISION INTERVIEW

FOLLOWING IS EXCERPT FROM DAVID FROST'S TELEVISION INTERVIEW WITH FORMER PRESIDENT NIXON ON MAY 12:

QUOTE: Q. THERE WAS ANOTHER REGIONAL WAR DURING YOUR PRESIDENCY THAT COULD WELL HAVE EMBROILED THE BIG POWERS AND THAT WAS THE WAR BETWEEN INDIA AND PAKISTAN OVER BANGLADESH, WHAT HAD BEEN EAST PAKISTAN. HOW CLOSELY WAS THE UNITED STATES INVOLVED IN THAT PARTICULAR CONFLICT?

A. IN THE FIRST PHASE OF THE PAKISTAN-INDIAN CLASH, PAKISTAN CLEARLY, AH, WAS THE PARTY THAT WAS--HAS TO TAKE THE
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PAGE 02 STATE 110974

MAJOR RESPONSIBILITY AND BLAME, AH, BECAUSE OF THE CRUELTY WITH WHICH THEY PUT DOWN THE BANGLADESH, EAST PAKISTAN REBELLION. AS A RESULT OF THAT, AH, THIS BROUGHT INDIA INTO THE CONFLICT, AND INDIA, DESPITE WARNINGS FROM US, AND WE THINK EVEN FROM THE SOVIET UNION, AH, DECLARED WAR ON PAKISTAN--OR THEY DIDN'T DECLARE WAR ON PAKISTAN, THEY ENTERED, AH, BANGLADESH AH, FIGHTING THE PAKISTAN ARMY IN

BANGLADESH WITHOUT A DECLARATION OF WAR.

IN THE MEANTIME, MESSAGES ARE GOING BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND MOSCOW. WE ASK--TELL THE RUSSIANS HOW IMPORTANT IT IS FOR PAKISTANIS TO GIVE UP EAST PAKISTAN, AND, AH, THERE WERE A NUMBER OF ISSUES. BUT, IN ANY EVENT, WE BOTH GOT ACROSS TO EACH OTHER, AH, OUR POINTS OF VIEW. AND, OUR POINT OF VIEW WAS VERY STRONGLY STATED THAT WE THOUGHT THAT IF THE RUSSIANS ALLOWED THEIR CLIENT, INDIA, USING SOVIET ARMS, AH, TO DESTROY PAKISTAN, AH, BOTH EAST AND WEST, THAT THIS WOULD IMPERIL OUR FUTURE RELATIONSHIP. AND, WE PUT IT DOWN JUST AS HARD AS THAT. NOW, WHAT HAPPENED WAS THAT AFTER THE BANGLADESH PHASE OF IT, AH, BEGAN TO BE WORKED OUT, EVEN THOUGH INDIA AS YOU RECALL, AH, WOULD NOT ADHERE TO A U.N. CEASE-FIRE RESOLUTION THERE. THEN, FROM A SOURCE THAT WE CONSIDER TO BE TOTALLY RELIABLE, WE LEARNED THAT PRIME MINISTER INDIRA GANDHI, IN A MEETING OF HER CABINET, HAD DIRECTED THAT A MILITARY OPERATION BE PUT IN PLACE TO ATTACK WEST PAKISTAN, AND WE HAD, AS I SAID, INFORMATION THAT WE KNEW WAS COMPLETELY RELIABLE.

IT WAS THEN THAT WE MADE THE MOVE THAT WE DID MAKE. IT WAS THEN THAT I ORDERED THE CARRIER TASK FORCE INTO THE INDIAN OCEAN. WE SENT A VERY SHARP NOTE, OF COURSE, TO THE RUSSIANS, AH, AND AH, THE INDIANS, AH, AH, ACCORDING TO THE RUSSIANS, AH, THIS WAS BREZHNEV'S, I THOUGHT VERY WEAK RESPONSE, HE SAYS: "WELL, THEY'RE VERY DIFFICULT TO DEAL WITH. WE FIND THAT OUR INFLUENCE ON THEM AT THIS POINT, ONCE THEY HAVE TASTED THE VICTORY IN EAST PAKISTAN, UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 03 STATE 110974

IS VERY LITTLE." BUT I KNEW THAT WE HAD TO HELP TRY TO SAVE WEST PAKISTAN.

NOW, UNLESS WE HAD BROUGHT PRESSURE TO BEAR ON THE RUSSIANS, UNLESS WE HAD BASICALLY CONDITIONED OUR CONTINUED PROGRESS TOWARD THE SUMMIT, DETENTE, ETC., ON THEIR RESTRAINING THEIR CLIENTS, AND WE OF COURSE BY THE SAME TOKEN, WOULD RESTRAIN, TO THE EXTENT WE COULD, THE PAKISTANIS, WHO DIDN'T NEED TO BE RESTRAINED; THEY WERE DEFEATED. UNLESS THAT HAD HAPPENED, I BELIEVE, AH, I BELIEVE, THAT, AH, SHE WOULD HAVE TAKEN WEST PAKISTAN. SHE WOULD HAVE GOBBLED IT UP AND THAT WOULD HAVE HAD DRAMATIC CONSEQUENCES: AN EFFECT ON THE CHINESE, ON AMERICAN-SOVIET RELATIONS, FOR REASONS THAT I'VE MENTIONED, AS WELL AS OF COURSE, THE POINT IS: IT WOULD HAVE BEEN WRONG AND TOTALLY WRONG. AND, SO BASICALLY, WE SAVED WEST PAKISTAN BECAUSE IT WAS RIGHT. WE ALSO SAVED IT, IT'S TRUE, BECAUSE IT HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH OUR CHINA INITIATIVE. THE CHINESE WERE PUTTING A LOT OF PRESSURE ON US TO DO SOMETHING. THEY COULDN'T DO

ANYTHING. THEY DIDN'T WANT TO GET INVOLVED IN A WAR WITH
INDIA AT THAT POINT, ALTHOUGH THEY HAD UTTER CONTEMPT FOR
THE INDIANS.

WHAT WE DID IN SAVING WEST PAKISTAN BUILT UP A LOT OF
CREDIBILITY WITH THE CHINESE. END QUOTE. CHRISTOPHER

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